United Nations A/ES-10/378–S/2007/58

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
6 February 2007

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-second year

Identical letters dated 6 February 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

In follow-up to our letter dated 24 January 2007, Israel, the occupying Power, has stepped up its illegal actions, especially in Occupied East Jerusalem, which aim to intensify expansionist policy for the colonization and Judaization of Arab Jerusalem, with the support of fanatic Jewish settler groups.

Israel, the occupying Power, is continuing its campaign to Judaize the city of Jerusalem and create a new demographic composition in the occupied city. Such actions demonstrate clearly the intransigence of the Israeli Government and its persistence in defying the will of the international community and in violating international law and United Nations resolutions. In this context, it is imperative for the international community to take measures in order to confront these Israeli policies and actions, to ensure respect for international law and to prevent further escalation of the situation in the region.

In line with this unchecked intransigence, Israeli occupying authorities have gone ahead with the condemnable plan to step up its aggression against Islamic Waqf sites in Occupied East Jerusalem. Most notably, Israeli occupying authorities have begun demolishing a historic road connecting Bab Al-Maghariba with the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound, in addition to two rooms adjacent to the Western Wall, thus exposing the Holy Compound and making it more vulnerable yet to future acts of aggression. Additionally, Israeli occupying authorities continue to carry out excavation works below the Holy Al-Aqsa Compound, undermining its foundations and threatening it with collapse.

There are also concerning reports that Israel, the occupying Power, plans to construct a tourist side below the Holy Al-Aqsa Compound, further raising fears about serious threats facing the Holy Compound. Additionally, Israeli occupying authorities have banned Palestinians below the age of 45 from entering the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque Compound in grave contravention of their basic right to access

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their holy sites and clear violation of Israel's obligations, as an occupying Power, to ensure and protect that right.

These provocative actions are not the first of their kind. Since 1968, the Security Council has adopted 16 resolutions regarding the city of Jerusalem, and has repeatedly declared that all measures and arrangements taken by Israel, the occupying Power, including the legislative and administrative ones, which aim at changing the legal status, demographic composition and character of the city, are null and void and without any legal validity whatsoever. Furthermore, the Security Council has repeatedly reaffirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to all the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, including East Jerusalem.

Obviously, the drive by Israel, the occupying Power, to Judaize Jerusalem and to illegally change the status, demographic composition and character of the Holy City is intensifying amid the inability of the Security Council to stop the Israeli violation of international law and relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

The Security Council, as the body responsible for maintaining international peace and security, has the responsibility to take immediate action in order to reverse the Israeli decision, bring an end to the Israeli violations and guarantee respect for the Council's resolutions and for international law.

It must be absolutely clear that Israel, as an occupying Power, has responsibilities in accordance with international law that it must respect with regard to safeguarding holy sites in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as ensuring and respecting Palestinians' rights to access their holy sites. Respecting these rights is not a luxury Israel can choose to bestow upon the Palestinian people under its occupation. Instead, it is an obligation that Israel must be compelled to respect.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Muin **Shreim**
Chargé d' affaires a.i.